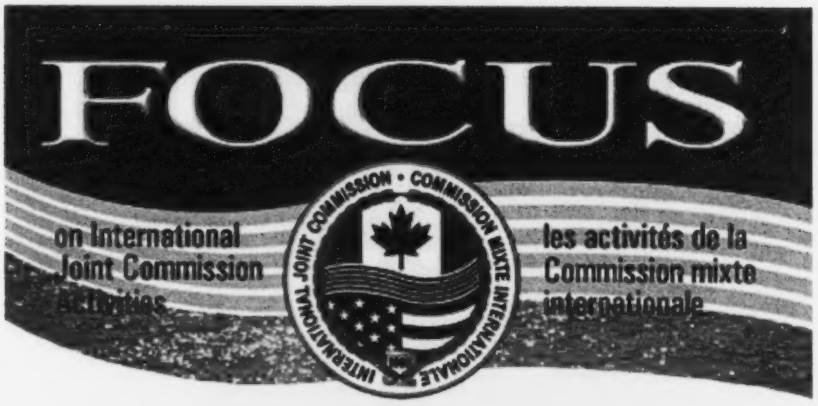
FOCUS
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Spring 2006
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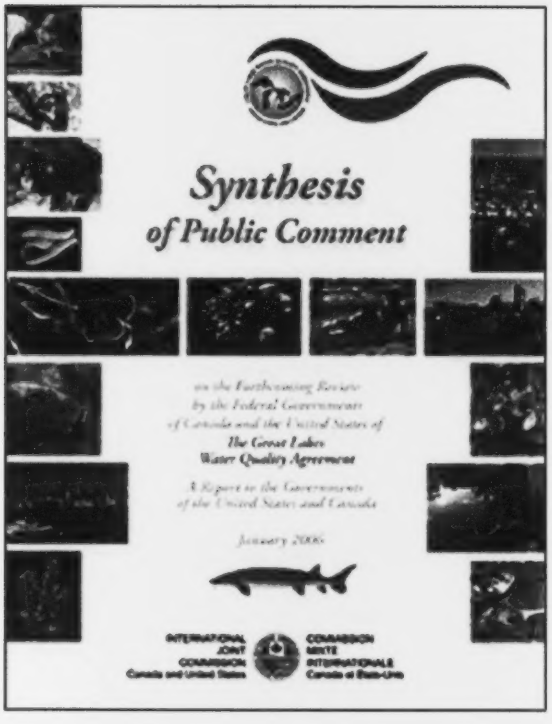


Citizens call for renewed efforts under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement

If turnout is anything to go by, people care about the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Hundreds of citizens came to public meetings and participated in a Web dialogue last year, while thousands of others sent emails, letters and faxes

to express their expectations and hopes for the future of the Agreement. The governments of the United States and Canada had asked the IJC to seek the public's views before the governments started their review of the Agreement, which they must undertake every six years. The governments first signed the Agreement in 1972 and it was last amended in 1987.

The IJC's recently-released *Synthesis of Public Comment* reflects the views of more than 4,000 participants in this public consultation. Citizens across the basin demanded good water quality and stressed that clean water is essential to ensure a healthy future for the lakes as well as the socio-economic well-being of basin residents and their communities. There was widespread support for the Agreement as a means for achieving this and participants called on all levels of government to reinvigorate their efforts to implement the Agreement. Holding governments accountable for meeting their commitments was also stressed throughout the basin.

While many participants felt that the governments should review the Agreement thoroughly, not all thought the focus should be broader than it is today. Many felt that new provisions should be added to address a range of issues affecting the ecosystem, such as aquatic invasive species, land use and watershed management and interbasin transfers of water. Others said that the Agreement must keep its focus on the injury from pollution of the waters so it remains an effective tool for achieving progress.

There was also considerable discussion of incorporating specific objectives and timetables, along with strengthening the institutional mechanisms needed to ensure accountability for achieving the goals of the Agreement. Many participants pointed to the need for increased monitoring efforts to better assess progress to restore environmental conditions.

Many comments, especially during the Web dialogue, called on governments and the IJC to carry out public education efforts to build support for Great Lakes restoration, particularly in regard to getting people more involved with water quality issues in their local communities. The Remedial Action Plans to restore the local Areas of Concern were often cited as a source of great hope for making tangible improvements at the community level, but were also regarded as a great source of

frustration due to the slow progress. Mayors and representatives of municipal governments who attended the public meetings said that they wanted a more formal voice in the Agreement process. Overall, the high level of participation and depth of commentary demonstrated that there is a strong constituency for the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.

The IJC began the public consultation process with its Biennial Meeting in Kingston, Ontario, in June 2005 and subsequently held 14 public meetings across the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River basin in the fall. A four-day Web dialogue near the end of the process allowed anyone with access to the Internet to discuss issues with a panel of experts and citizens in other parts of the basin, as well as to provide comment.

The IJC established partnerships with mayors across the basin, who cooperated enthusiastically by making meeting spaces and equipment available for the public meetings. A Citizens Advisory Group of 24 leading science and policy experts from both countries helped the IJC develop a series of consultation questions, as well as an outreach strategy. The IJC also produced a *Guide to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement* that provides background information to the review by governments.

In addition to holding the early public consultation process, the IJC will provide the governments with its own advice on the review of the Agreement in a separate report. The IJC's advice will be informed by views expressed during the public consultations and the research, analysis and advice of its policy and technical committees. These include the Great Lakes Water Quality Board, Great Lakes Science Advisory Board, Council of Great Lakes Research Managers and International Air Quality Advisory Board.

The *Synthesis of Public Comment on the Forthcoming Review by the Federal Governments of Canada and the United States of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement* is available from the IJC offices and online at www.ijc.org. The complete record of public comment is available on CD-ROM. Transcripts of the public meetings are also available on the website.

The IJC wishes to acknowledge the tremendous contribution to its consultation process provided by the following mayors and their staff:

Mayor Herb W. Bergson, Duluth, Minnesota
Mayor Jane Campbell, Cleveland, Ohio
Mayor Richard M. Daley, Chicago Illinois
Mayor Eddie Francis, Windsor, Ontario
Mayor William A. Johnson, Jr., Rochester, New York
Mayor Robert J. Katt, Bay City, Michigan
Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, Detroit, Michigan
Mayor Jean-Paul L'Allier, Quebec City, Quebec
Mayor George J. MacDonald, Midland, Ontario
Mayor David Miller, Toronto, Ontario
Mayor Lynn Peterson, Thunder Bay, Ontario
Mayor John F. Rowswell, Sault Ste Marie, Ontario
Mayor James Schmitt, Green Bay, Wisconsin
Mayor Gérald Tremblay, Montréal, Quebec

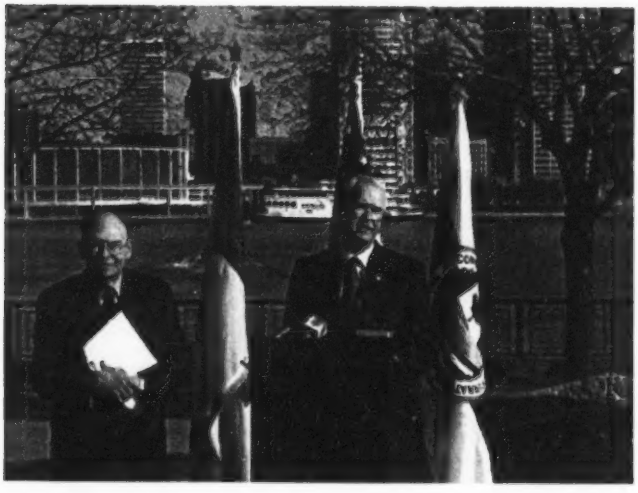
The people have spoken: United States and Canada must renew their commitments to restore water quality

by the Rt. Hon. Herb Gray and Hon. Dennis Schornack

Public participation is the bulwark of democracy. For the Commissioners of the IJC, our most recent opportunity to engage citizens across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin was an honor and a privilege. In June of 2005, the federal governments of the United States and Canada asked the IJC to provide an early opportunity for public input into the review of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. We worked with the Mayors and a variety of organizations to reach out to the communities, and from June to December we held a conference, 14 regional public meetings and a four-day Web dialogue. The response was exhilarating. Over 4,000 people came to our meetings, or participated by letter, email, fax and telephone. Their views are captured in the *Synthesis of Public Comment* report that we have just released.

The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement was

first signed in 1972 and last updated in 1987. It expresses the commitment by our two countries to restore and maintain the chemical, physical and biological integrity of the waters of the Great Lakes basin ecosystem and has resulted in a notable cooperation and progress. The citizens of both countries told us that they want governments at all levels to reinvigorate their efforts to achieve the goals of the Agreement. They delivered a strong message that good water quality is not only essential for a healthy ecosystem, but also for their jobs, quality of life and the overall health and well-being of the basin's residents and their communities. Most wanted the review to look beyond the Agreement's current focus on chemical pollution to address a variety of critical issues such as invasive species and conservation of wetlands. Change is the only thing that is permanent, and the Agreement must change if the United States and Canada wish to continue the progress made over the past 30 years. But citizens only wanted to broaden the scope if it could be done without losing the focus on restoring water quality. No one wanted the Agreement to be so broad that it would be ineffective. Indeed many called for more specific objectives and deadlines, as well as strengthened mechanisms to ensure accountability.



Chairmen Gray and Schornack, with Commissioners Blaney, Brooks and Olson launch the Synthesis of Public Comment Report at Dieppe Park, Windsor, Ontario, across river from Detroit, Michigan, April 20, 2006.

The two federal governments have recently begun their review of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. Restoring and maintaining water quality in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River basin ecosystem will require a great deal of political will by each country as well as close cooperation between them. The citizens of both countries have voiced their support for renewing and strengthening this vital Agreement. Now is the time to craft the commitments that will guide Canada and the United States in working together to restore the waters of the world's premier freshwater ecosystem.

Governments launch review of Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement

The governments of Canada and the United States began their formal review of the Agreement in March 2006. They have committed to an open, transparent and inclusive review process that allows for the involvement of all interested parties.

An Agreement Review Committee (ARC), established by the governments' Binational Executive Committee, will lead and coordinate the review process. The ARC, co-chaired by Environment Canada and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, includes representatives of federal, provincial, state, tribal and municipal agencies. One of the ARC's responsibilities is to develop a public consultation strategy early in the review process.

Ten Review Working Groups will be established by the ARC to facilitate the review of the Agreement. These groups will be composed of experts, including IJC observers, to address the following topics:

- Scope and purpose, goals and objectives, function;
- Toxic chemicals;
- Remedial Action Plans and Lakewide Management Plans;
- Phosphorus and non-point source pollution;
- Sediment-related issues;
- Research and monitoring provisions;
- Coast Guard annexes;
- Groundwater issues;
- Third party review of governance provisions and institutions; and
- Special issues.

The work of the Review Working Groups commenced in late April 2006 and will continue to the end of Calendar Year 2006. Throughout this process, the ARC will monitor progress, as well as provide assistance and resolve issues as needed. At the end of the Agreement review, the results and recommendations of each Review Working Group, and any other analyses, will be compiled by ARC in a draft Agreement review report and provided to the Binational Executive Committee for its consideration.

The Binational Executive Committee will approve and release the draft Agreement Review Report for a 60-day public consultation. Review and approval by the relevant agency or department of each government may be required. The Binational Executive Committee will then make a formal recommendation to Foreign Affairs Canada and the U.S. Department of State on what, if any, actions should occur as a result of the review.

The governments will then consider the findings and recommendations of the Binational Executive Committee and determine next steps.

For more information, visit www.binational.net or contact Mark Elster, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, by phone at (312) 353-2018 or email at elster.mark@epa.gov, or Monica Lim, Environment Canada, by phone at (416) 739-4787 or email at monica.lim@ec.gc.ca.

Study will examine water levels on Osoyoos Lake

With its current Order of Approval for Zosel Dam, located in the state of Washington below the outlet of Osoyoos Lake, set to expire in 2013, the IJC is gearing up for the renewal process. In early April, the International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control presented the IJC with a plan of study for investigating issues related to the regulation of Osoyoos Lake water levels, including several that have been raised in recent years by basin residents at the board's annual public meetings. Such issues include the management of water levels during drought years and the timing of summer and winter operations. In February, the board also held two public meetings on the draft plan of study. Participants at the Osoyoos, British Columbia meeting reiterated their strong concerns over water quality in Osoyoos Lake and the possible impacts of water levels regulation. Participants in Oroville, Washington were equally passionate in their concerns about water supplies.

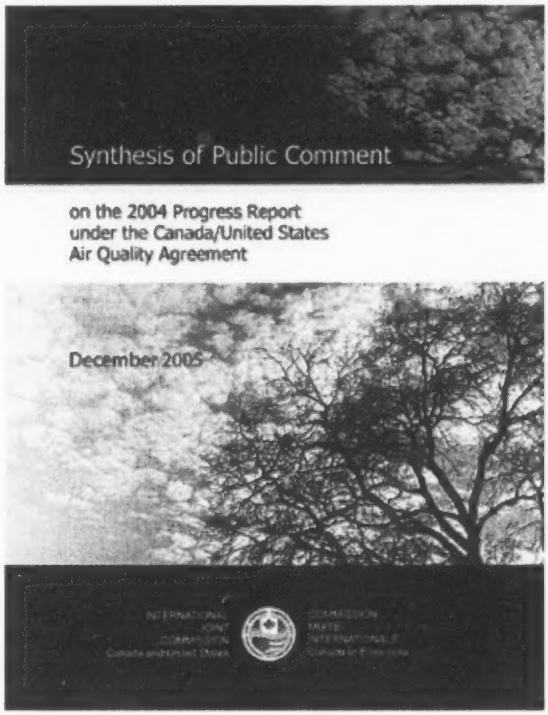
Osoyoos Lake straddles the boundary between British Columbia and Washington and is of prime importance to agricultural interests in the region. The lake also serves as a recreational resource and domestic water supply. Outflows from the lake are regulated at Zosel Dam, located on the Okanogan River 2.7 kilometres (1.7 miles) below the lake. The board was established to ensure implementation of the IJC's 1946 Order of Approval with regard to the operation of Zosel Dam. The IJC approved the construction of a new Zosel Dam to replace the former structure in 1982 and issued a Supplementary Order of Approval in 1985. Actual operation of the dam is conducted

by the Oroville and Tonasket Irrigation District under contract to the project owner, the State of Washington Department of Ecology.

The Osoyoos Lake board holds an annual meeting and provides the IJC with a report each April. Monthly reports of daily lake levels and flows are kept to assure compliance with the IJC's orders of approval. The board has recommended that the IJC adopt the Plan of Study and take the necessary steps to fund and implement the plan. It has also recommended that the IJC take additional steps to respond to community concerns in the near term. The IJC is considering the information and advice provided by its board. For more information about the International Osoyoos Lake Board of Control visit its website under the "boards" tab at: www.ijc.org.

Comments support progress on air quality, but express concern about health effects

In March, the IJC released its *Synthesis of Public Comment* on the 2004 Progress Report under the Canada-United States Air Quality Agreement. Under the 1991 agreement, the IJC is responsible for inviting public comment on progress reports prepared by a Canada- U.S. Air Quality Committee that is led by Environment Canada and the Environmental Protection Agency. The IJC received 35 written submissions on the 2004 Progress Report and an additional 15 presentations at two consultation meetings. Many submissions were from provincial, state and municipal agencies, as well as from professional groups.



Respondents were generally satisfied that progress has been made by both countries to reduce sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds in the eastern part of the continent. However, many questioned whether the current sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide reductions were sufficient to promote full recovery of ecosystems or to protect of human health. While these respondents found the information on emissions reductions that was provided in the progress report to be useful, several thought that more assessment of environmental and health impact trends was needed. Others stated that adequate data was not provided to support the conclusion in the 2004 Progress Report that human health and the environment have benefited greatly from progress under the Agreement.

Several people also wanted to see the Agreement address issues that are not currently covered by it, including the adoption of specific objectives for transboundary particulate matter, mercury and other persistent toxic substances. Copies of the *Synthesis of Public Comment* on the 2004 Progress Report under the Canada-United States Air Quality Agreement are available from an IJC office or on the Web at www.ijc.org.

IJC Role in Souris River basin continues to evolve

The process to consolidate the international monitoring and reporting activities in the Souris River basin continues with recent steps to merge the Souris River Bilateral Water Quality Monitoring Group with the IJC's International Souris River Board.

The Souris River originates in Saskatchewan, passes through North Dakota, and then crosses into Manitoba before joining the Assiniboine River. Its total length is approximately 705 kilometres (435 miles). In 1940, the governments of the United States and Canada asked the IJC to investigate the regulation, use and flow of the Souris River and its tributaries and the apportionment of water between the two countries. The governments approved the interim measures recommended by the IJC for cross-border sharing of Souris River waters and the IJC established an International Souris River Board of Control to monitor compliance with the interim measures.

As part of its International Watershed Initiative, and to ensure a more ecosystemic approach, the IJC formed the International Souris River Board in 2002 by combining its International Souris River Board of Control and the Souris River aspects of its International Souris-Red Rivers Engineering Board. In addition to overseeing the sharing of water under the interim measures, the combined board reports on water use and development activities in the Souris River basin that could have transboundary impacts.

In 2005, the governments of the United States and Canada disbanded their Souris River Bilateral Water Quality Monitoring Group and transferred the responsibility to report on water quality in the Souris River to the IJC. The International Souris River Board is currently developing a draft directive for consideration by the IJC that will include responsibilities for providing advice on water quality monitoring and objectives, and annual reporting on water quality in the Souris River. The International Souris River Board is also working with the former monitoring group to propose new members for the board.

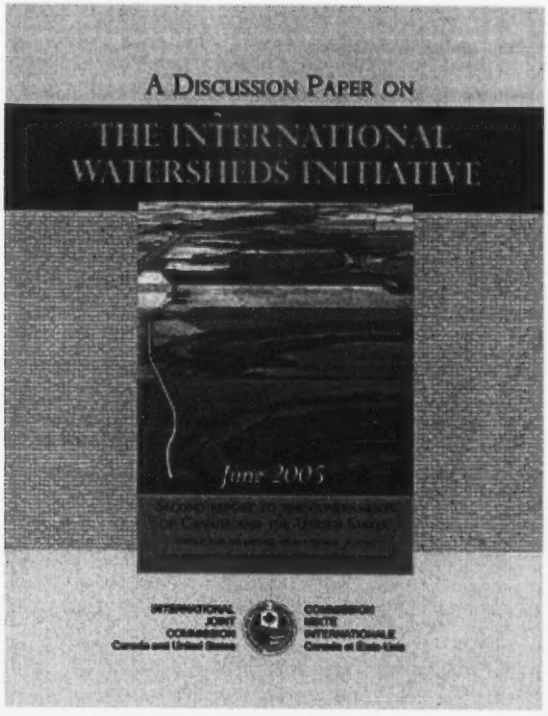
IJC gives its International Watershed Initiative a push

The IJC is moving its International Watershed Initiative ahead towards on-the-ground results. Specific projects for the St. Croix River, Red River and Rainy River watersheds are proposed in a discussion paper, released in December 2005, that focus on strengthening the capabilities of the existing IJC boards and local organizations in these three watersheds.

St. Croix River

St. Croix River

Several projects to improve outreach efforts and the base of information within the watersheds were identified in the paper by the IJC and its boards. Examples of those that have received initial funding include a digital watershed mapping project in the St. Croix watershed and data collection for a hydrologic and hydraulic model in the Rainy River watershed.



The initiative is based on the premise that local people, given appropriate assistance, are in the best position to prevent potential disputes and resolve local transboundary issues. Looking to the future, the IJC believes that building the capacity to solve problems at the local level will substantially reduce, and perhaps eliminate the need to directly involve the two national governments in resolving international watershed issues. The IJC is hopeful that it can secure additional funding for a number of these projects. Watch for updates on this important initiative in future issues of *Focus*.

Comments on the discussion paper are welcome. The discussion paper is available from an IJC office or under the "activities" tab at www.ijc.org .

People

In October, the IJC welcomed **Dr. Karen E. Vigmostad** as Director of its Great Lakes Regional Office in Windsor, Ontario. Dr. Vigmostad has spent 20 years working on Great Lakes policy and conservation. Most recently, she served as a policy analyst with the Northeast-Midwest Institute in Washington, DC, where she specialized in Great Lakes ecosystem restoration and water management. She leads a binational

collaborative for the conservation of Great Lakes islands and serves on the Council of Great Lakes Governors' Annex 2001 Resource Group, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem Team and the State of the Lakes Ecosystem Conference (SOLEC) Advisory Committee.

Dr. Vigmostad was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan and came to love the Great Lakes by boating with her family on Lake St. Clair. She views her role as finding creative, innovative ways to foster peace between nature and culture. She looks forward to serving as director during this critical time for the IJC and the Laurentian Great Lakes.

The IJC welcomes recent appointments to its boards and expresses its gratitude to those who contributed their time and talent to assist Canada and the United States with managing transboundary environmental issues.

*** Council of Great Lakes Research Managers**

Welcomes :

Daniel Bondy
Manager, Environmental and Occupational Toxicology Division
Environmental Health Sciences Bureau
Environmental Health Canada

Dr. Saad Y. Jasim
Chief Executive Officer
Walkerton Clean Water Centre

Dr. Janet R. Keough
Associate Director for Science
National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Completing Service :

Dr. Robert Andrews
University of Toronto

Dr. David Blakey
Health Canada

Dr. Patricia Chow-Fraser
McMaster University/International Association for Great Lakes Research

* Great Lakes Water Quality Board

Welcomes :

Alec Denys
Director, Great Lakes Branch
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

Thomas W. Easterly
Commissioner
Indiana Department of Environmental Management

Completing Service :

Michael Goffin, as Acting Canadian Co-Chair
Environment Canada, Ontario Region

Mr. David de Launay
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources

* Great Lakes Science Advisory Board

Welcomes :

Dr. C. Scott Findlay
Associate Professor
Institute of the Environment
University of Ottawa

Dr. David R. S. Lean
Adjunct Professor
Biology Department
University of Ottawa

Marcia Valiante
Professor of Law
University of Windsor

Completing Service :

Dr. Pierre Payment
Michigan Technological University

Dr. Bruce Krushelnicki

Burlington, Ontario

David Stonehouse
Manager, Stewardship & Restoration Evergreen
Toronto, Ontario

Dr. Lesbia Smith
Toronto, Ontario

* Health Professionals Task Force

Welcomes :

Dr. Monica Campbell
Manager
Environmental Protection Office
Toronto Public Health

* International Rainy Lake Board of Control

Welcomes :

Peter Williams, P.Eng.
Thunder Bay, Ontario

* International Red River Board

Welcomes :

Wayne Dybvig, Co-Chair, Canadian Section
Executive Director, Transboundary Waters Unit
Prairie & Northern Region
Environment Canada

Michael J. Ryan, Co-Chair, U.S. Section
Great Plains Regional Director
Bureau of Reclamation

Phil Adkins, P.Eng.
Acting Director
Agricultural Water Directorate
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
– Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration

Will Haapala
Regional Manager, Northwest Region Office
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Completing Service :

Maryanne Bach, Bureau of Reclamation

Dr. Kevin Cash, Interim Co-Chair, Canadian Section

Richard Kellow
Environment Canada

Jeff Lewis
Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Alain Vermette
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

* International Souris River Board

Welcomes :

Bob Harrison
Senior Hyrdologist
Water Science and Management Branch
Manitoba Water Stewardship

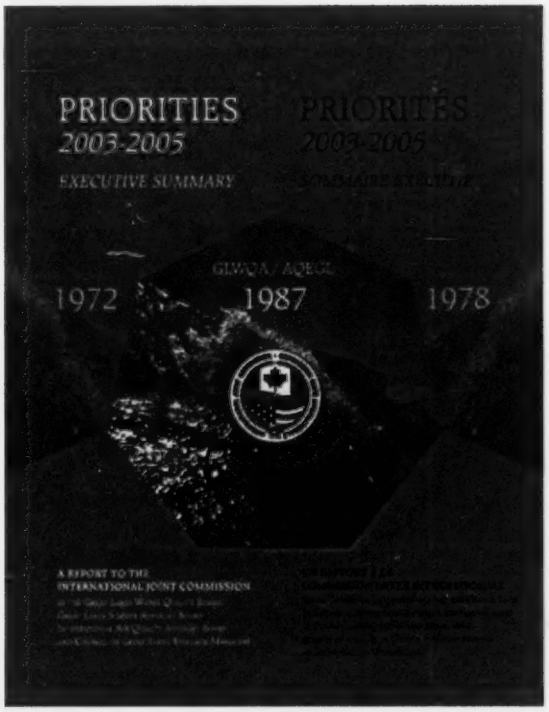
Completing Service :
Richard J. Bowering
Manitoba Water Stewardship

Hot off the press

- *Synthesis of Public Comment on the Forthcoming Review by the Federal Governments of Canada and the United States of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement* , January 2006. Reflects the main points and other views of the participants in the IJC's public consultations on the forthcoming review. Obtain a copy from an IJC office or online at www.ijc.org .

- *Synthesis of Public Comment on the 2004 Progress Report under the Canada-United States Air Quality Agreement* , December 2005. Conveys the views of organizations and individuals in Canada and the United States on the progress toward meeting the goals of the 1991 Agreement and its annexes. Obtain a copy from an IJC office or online at www.ijc.org .

- *Priorities 2003- 2005, Executive Summary* . A report to the International Joint Commission by its advisory boards under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement on their findings and recommendations from the 2003-2005 priority cycle. Obtain a copy from an IJC office or online at www.ijc.org.



- *A Discussion Paper on the International Watersheds Initiative* , June 2005. Proposes specific initiatives to further develop this initiative. Obtain a copy from an IJC office or online at www.ijc.org.

Contact Us

The IJC is interested in your views on any of our activities. You may contact us in the following ways:

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Email	Commission@ottawa.ijc.org	Commission@washington.ijc.org	Commission@windsor.ijc.org
Mail	234 Laurier Avenue West	1250 23rd Street NW Suite 100	100 Ouellette Avenue, 8th Floor

	22nd Floor Ottawa, ON K1P 6K6	Washington, DC 20440	Windsor, ON N9A 6T3 or P.O. Box 32869 Detroit, MI 48232-2869
Fax	(613) 993-5583	(202) 467-7046	(519) 257-6740
Telephone	(613) 995-2984	(202) 736-9000	(519) 257-6700 or (313) 226-2170

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The International Joint Commission prevents and resolves disputes between the United States of America and Canada under the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty and pursues the common good of both countries as an independent and objective advisor to the two governments.